

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing network accounts, comprising:

linking a second account having general access to a first account having member
5 access; and

granting at least part of said member access to said second account while said
second account is linked to said first account;

wherein said first account has a corresponding subscription,

said general access provides at least one privilege, and

10 said member access provides two or more privileges that are not provided by said
general access.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said subscription has a higher cost than a cost needed to be eligible for an account
15 having general access.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an
online game.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to initiate an online
game.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to access a restricted
online resource.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

30 said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an
online game in a way that indicates the account has member access.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game with a visual cue indicating the account has member access.

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8. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game in a way that is different from a way an account without this privilege of member access participates.

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9. The method of claim 8, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to access one or more special resources in an online game that are not available to an account without member access.

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10. The method of claim 8, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to access one or more special features in an online game that are not available to an account without this privilege of member access.

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11. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said first account also has members-only access, and

said members-only access provides one or more privileges different from said two or more privileges provided by said member access and from said at least one privilege provided by said general access.

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12. The method of claim 11, wherein:

said second account does not have members-only access when said second account is linked to said first account.

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13. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said first account also has said general access.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

5 receiving a create member account request indicating said subscription;
confirming said subscription allows creating a member account; and
creating said first account.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:

10 upgrading said subscription to allow creating a member account.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a create non-member account request; and
creating said second account.

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17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a link request indicating said first account and said second account; and
confirming said first account allows linking.

20 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

confirming said second account allows linking.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

25 receiving an unlink request indicating said first account and said second account;
revoking said granted at least part of said member access from said second
account; and
unlinking said second account from said first account.

20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

30 receiving a service request indicating a service having a minimum access and an
account;

confirming said requesting account currently has access meeting said minimum access of said indicated service; and
providing said service.

5 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:

upgrading said requesting account to have access meeting said minimum access of said indicated service.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein:

10 granting said at least part of said member access includes granting less than all of said two or more privileges of said member access to said second account.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein:

15 granting said at least part of said member access includes granting at least one of said two or more privileges of said member access to said second account for a limited period of time.

24. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

20 removing said member access from said first account while said second account is linked to said first account.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein:

said second account is linked to said first account indirectly through an intermediary data object.

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26. The method of claim 25, wherein:

said intermediary data object is a pool.

27. A method of managing network accounts, comprising:

30 creating an account having general access;
receiving an upgrade request;

confirming said account is permitted to be upgraded based on said account meeting one or more requirements for having member access; and upgrading said account to have member access.

5 28. A method of linking network accounts, comprising:

creating a first account having general access;

sending a link invitation indicating a second account having member access;

receiving a link acceptance indicating said first account will be linked to said second account;

10 sending a service request indicating a service having a minimum access requiring member access; and

accessing said service.

29. A method of linking network accounts, comprising:

15 creating a first account having member access;

receiving a link invitation indicating a second account having general access;

sending a link request indicating said second account is to be linked to said first account.

20 30. A computer program, stored on a tangible storage medium, for use in managing network accounts, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

link a second account having general access to a first account having member access; and

25 grant at least part of said member access to said second account while said second account is linked to said first account;

wherein said first account has a corresponding subscription,

said general access provides at least one privilege, and

said member access provides two or more privileges that are not provided by said

30 general access.

31. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said subscription has a higher cost than a cost needed to be eligible for an account having general access.

5 32. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game.

33. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

10 said member access privileges include allowing an account to initiate an online game.

34. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

15 said member access privileges include allowing an account to access a restricted online resource.

35. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game in a way that indicates the account has member access.

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36. The computer program of claim 35, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game with a visual cue indicating the account has member access.

25 37. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to participate in an online game in a way that is different from a way an account without this privilege of member access participates.

38. The computer program of claim 37, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to access one or more special resources in an online game that are not available to an account without member access.

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39. The computer program of claim 37, wherein:

said member access privileges include allowing an account to access one or more special features in an online game that are not available to an account without this privilege of member access.

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40. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said first account also has members-only access, and

said members-only access provides one or more privileges different from said two or more privileges provided by said member access and from said at least one privilege provided by said general access.

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41. The computer program of claim 40, wherein:

said second account does not have members-only access when said second account is linked to said first account.

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42. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

said first account also has said general access.

43. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

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process a create member account request indicating said subscription;
confirm said subscription allows creating a member account; and
create said first account.

44. The computer program of claim 43, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

upgrade said subscription to allow creating a member account.

5 45. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

process a create non-member account request; and
create said second account.

10 46. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

process a link request indicating said first account and said second account; and
confirm said first account allows linking.

15 47. The computer program of claim 46, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

confirm said second account allows linking.

48. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

20 process an unlink request indicating said first account and said second account;
revoke said granted at least part of said member access from said second account;
and

unlink said second account from said first account.

25 49. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

process a service request indicating a service having a minimum access and an
account;

confirm said requesting account currently has access meeting said minimum access of said indicated service; and
provide said service.

5 50. The computer program of claim 49, further comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

upgrade said requesting account to have access meeting said minimum access of said indicated service.

10 51. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

granting said at least part of said member access includes granting less than all of said two or more privileges of said member access to said second account.

52. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

15 granting said at least part of said member access includes granting at least one of said two or more privileges of said member access to said second account for a limited period of time.

53. The computer program of claim 30, further comprising executable instructions that
20 cause a computer to:

remove said member access from said first account while said second account is linked to said first account.

54. The computer program of claim 30, wherein:

25 said second account is linked to said first account indirectly through an intermediary data object.

55. The computer program of claim 54, wherein:

30 said intermediary data object is a pool.

56. A computer program, stored on a tangible storage medium, for use in managing network accounts, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

create an account having general access;

5 process an upgrade request;

confirm said account is permitted to be upgraded based on said account meeting one or more requirements for having member access; and

upgrade said account to have member access.

10 57. A computer program, stored on a tangible storage medium, for use in linking network accounts, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

create a first account having general access;

send a link invitation indicating a second account having member access;

process a link acceptance indicating said first account will be linked to said

15 second account;

send a service request indicating a service having a minimum access requiring member access; and

access said service.

20 58. A computer program, stored on a tangible storage medium, for use in linking network accounts, the program comprising executable instructions that cause a computer to:

create a first account having member access;

process a link invitation indicating a second account having general access;

send a link request indicating said second account is to be linked to said first

25 account.

59. A system for managing network accounts, comprising:

means for linking a second account having general access to a first account having member access; and

30 means for granting at least part of said member access to said second account while said second account is linked to said first account;

wherein said first account has a corresponding subscription,
said general access provides at least one privilege, and
said member access provides two or more privileges that are not provided by said
general access.

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